

Cont. from pg. 1

Many times the dogs actually injure themselves during an attack. William Chambers, fourth grade student, said "I thought the blood on the arm guard was from the officer, not the dog."

Mr. Dufrene explained that, "The officer's voice commands add to the intensity."

MSgt. Miller reminds students, "Dogs are often given commands in different languages, such as Dutch or German. Many people think this is done so that the criminal will not understand the command, but only the trainer can direct the dog. Although this is a myth, the real reason is much simpler. The dogs were trained with those command words, and it's much easier for the officer to learn a few Dutch or German words than to retrain the dog with new commands."

When asked how long these dogs can be used in police service, MSgt. DeWitt said, "... until the ball drive deteriorates and the dog is no longer interested in toys. ... until his health gives out."

MSgt. Miller explained that many different kinds of dogs can be trained to assist, such as German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, bloodhounds, etc. Our dogs were trained by the military at an Air Force base in Texas and are valued at \$25,000-\$35,000.

Another area where drug dogs can serve a dual purpose is in the detection of cell phones on the prison compound. Today, cell phones are considered contraband. PCC officers are now working with the drug dogs to detect cell phones on the compound.



OFFICERS FROM Phelps Correctional Center put on a demonstration with drug and chase dogs at DeQuincy Elementary School.

Dogs perform for kids

By TAMMY FONTENOT
School Counselor

Several officers from Phelps Correctional Center brought trained chase dogs to DeQuincy Elementary School during Substance Abuse Awareness Week and demonstrated how the dogs were used in chasing escapees, assisting local police in locating drugs and searching for missing persons.

MSgt. James Miller told students how MSgt. DeWitt uses her dog to find drugs, while bloodhounds are used to locate persons or to find children lost in the woods.

After questioning students as to what they would do if they were lost, MSgt. Miller offers this sound advice, "Sit down and stay in one place."

Lexie Ashworth and Makayla Green were both impressed when the search dogs were able to follow a test trail and locate a student hidden in the bushes.

Miller explained, "The bloodhound sense of smell is 100 times greater than our sense of smell. Everybody has a scent trail. We shed skin daily."

Using a scenario of a hamburger, Miller explained that as humans, we simply smell the hamburger as a whole, but dogs can detect each individual ingredient.

Jaxson Hext was impressed with how the bloodhound kept his nose to the ground, never losing the scent trail.

In demonstrating how the dogs are able to locate drugs, Lt. Alexander and MSgt. DeWitt placed four wooden boxes on the field, only two actually contained the drug scent. MSgt. DeWitt reminded students that real drugs aren't present. MSgt. Miller explained that when Bosco finds the drug scent, he will sit down. Each time he does, MSgt. DeWitt plays fetch with him.

He explains, "These dogs have no interest in drugs.

What they're actually looking for is their favorite toy. They have been trained to associate that toy with the smell of drugs. Bosco knows that as soon as he finds the drug scent, he will be rewarded with a game and his favorite toy."

Fifth grader Cade Blanchard exclaimed, "It was cool when the dogs found the drugs hidden in the boxes."

MSgt. Miller asks students, "What if we find the criminal and he takes off running again. ... Then, we need the patrol dog."

When Dagan Bradshaw asked how fast the patrol dog, Pajoo, could run, Lt. Miller laughingly replied, "Faster than me."

Lt. Alexander explained, "The trained dogs only listen to the handler. Although we've only had these dogs for a little over a year, they have become a vital part of the prison. The prisoners respect these canines."

Cont. on Page 3